



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR  
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
SHIELDS FOR FAMILIES  
KEITH VILLAGE HOUSING COMPLEX  
1500 E. KAY STREET  
COMPTON, CA 90022  
<http://latchildrencommission.org>**

**Monday, November 4, 2013  
10:00 AM**

AUDIO LINK FOR THE ENTIRE MEETING. (13-5235)

**Attachments:** [AUDIO](#)

**Present:** Chair Geneva Berger, Commissioner Helen Kleinberg, Commissioner Carol O. Biondi, Commissioner Patricia Curry, Commissioner Ann E. Franzen, Commissioner Dr. Sunny Kang, Commissioner Sydney Kamlager, Commissioner Adrienne Konigar-Macklin and Commissioner Martha Trevino-Powell

**Excused:** Vice Chair Susan F. Friedman, Commissioner Candace Cooper, Vice Chair Steven M. Olivas Esq., Commissioner Becky A. Shevlin and Commissioner Adelina Sorkin LCSW/ACSW

Call to Order. (13-5074)

**The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m.**

**I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

1. Introductions of November 4, 2013 Meeting attendees. (13-5100)

**Self-introductions were made.**

2. Approval of the November 4, 2013 Meeting Agenda. (13-5101)

**On motion of Commissioner Sydney Kamlager, seconded by Vice Chair Helen Kleinberg, unanimously carried, (Vice Chairs Friedman and Olivas, Commissioners Cooper, Shevlin and Sorkin being absent), this item was approved. Commissioner Kang was not present during the vote taken for this item.**

**DRAFT**

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3. Approval of the minutes from the Meeting of October 21, 2013. (13-5102)

**On motion of Vice Chair Helen Kleinberg, seconded by Commissioner Ann Franzen, unanimously carried, (Vice Chairs Friedman and Olivas, Commissioners Cooper, Shevlin and Sorkin being absent), this item was approved. Commissioner Kang was not present during the vote taken for this item.**

**Attachments:**    [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

## **II. REPORTS**

4. Chair's report for November 4, 2013 by Geneva Berger, Chair. (13-5103)

**Chair Berger introduced Adrienne Konigar-Macklin, the new Second District representative for the Commission, appointed on October 15, 2013.**

**Commissioner Konigar-Macklin provided a brief history of her background, stating that she is an administrative attorney, specializing in education law and a member of the Pomona Unified School District School Board.**

**Chair Berger formally reannounced the results of the Commission's election of officers held at the last meeting:**

**The Commission re-elected Geneva Berger as Chair for 2013-14; Susan Friedman and Steven Olivas, were reelected/elected respectively Vice-Chairs of the Commission for 2013-14.**

**By common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.**

5. DCFS Director's report for November 4, 2013 by Philip Browning, Director, DCFS. (13-5105)

**Director Browning reported the following:**

- **The Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection (BRC) is continuing its deliberation. A partial DCFS presentation was provided at the recent BRC meeting and the hope is to provide the full presentation at its next scheduled meeting. DCFS extended an invitation to BRC, to meet in person, to further discuss specific questions its members posed to DCFS at the last BRC meeting.**

- **DCFS rate of attrition is much lower than other large jurisdictions. After accounting for retirements and discharges, our percentage of employees leaving the Department is about 2.2% overall, and 3.4% for our Children's Social Worker's (CSW). At a recent meeting of a large group of Urban Child Welfare Directors, a representative from Florida said their attrition rate was 33% while Texas and San Diego representatives said their turnover rate was 24% and 8% respectively.**
- **The "real life" simulation component of the New Children's Social Worker (CSW) Training Program also includes a mock hospital and provides different scenarios as a teaching tool.**
- **150 additional CSW's are currently undergoing the DCFS hiring process. There were over 800 applications for the CSW II exam, and 300 applicants have been scheduled for testing. It is anticipated that the new incoming staff will reduce the average caseload for workers in the Continuing Services area from 32 to 29.**
- **DCFS is continuing work with Wraparound Providers. The current Wraparound Approach Services Request for Statement of Qualification (RFSQ) is moving more in the direction of a mental health model. Notices were recently sent regarding the Family Preservation contracted programs Request for Proposals (RFP). Some of the recipients were disappointed with the results. Results from hundreds of bids were recently reviewed; some of which were very surprising and will impact a number of individuals throughout the community. It is expected that individuals will be interested in reviewing their scored material for a potential appeal. The County has a very prescriptive RFP contracting process that includes a competitive bid solicitation as required by Federal and State mandates. Board Offices and County Counsel were informed of these recent activities.**
- **There is a continued reduction in the number of children placed in group homes and an increase in the number of children coming into care. This increase is partially attributed to the high number of hotline calls received reporting a child in danger. The call volume has increased reaching 20,000 within the last couple of months. However, the percentage of children detained has not changed, remaining at approximately 7%. Of the investigations done on an emergency basis, 93% of children stay with their parents and 77% of children currently under DCFS' responsibility are placed with their parents, relatives or adopted families. There is a misconception that the detention rate has**

increased; the rate has not increased. However, the number of children detained has increased slightly. The impact of AB12 has increased the number of youth in the child welfare system. With these older youth remaining in the system, there are efforts to encourage them to remain in school and move towards higher education. Additional support efforts for these older youth includes contracting with organizations to provide subsidized employment and inviting military recruiters to speak with youth to inform them of the different opportunities in the military sector. Staff interested in working specifically with older youth are being identified in each office.

By common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

### **III. PRESENTATIONS**

**6. Shields for Families Overview:**

- Kathryn S. Icenhower, Ph.D., LCSW, Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer (13-5106)

**Ms. Icenhower provided a brief history of SHIELDS for Families (SHIELDS) and presented the following:**

- **SHIELDS has been operating for 23 years. From the beginning, the organization has based everything around the voice of the family.**
- **SHIELDS' programs are offered in multiple sites in the community, including 20 school locations, and have over 60 partnerships with agencies located in the community. An integration of onsite supportive services are offered.**
- **SHIELDS began providing child welfare services in 1992 through a partnership with DCFS to provide Family Preservation. Presently, a full continuum of services from prevention to adoption is provided. The Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project (PIDP): ASK (Ask, Seek, Knock) Program was implemented in 2008 and has four Family Resource Centers located in Service Planning Area (SPA) 6. The Program is a collaborative partnership with multiple agencies to provide a comprehensive network of services. The Program is designed with a strength-based approach to helping families. Arrays of services are offered based on the families' needs. If necessary, families are linked to services related to developmental disabilities.**

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- Over 10,000 families are served annually with 75% of referrals coming from the community. Resource Center navigators work with DCFS cases as well as clients referred and recruited from other community sources. There is no differentiation of services for DCFS-referred or walk-in clients. Evaluation data shows a 12% recidivism rate for DCFS referred cases versus 23% for DCFS families not accessing services.
  - The Partnership for Families Program derived from the Alternative Response Model through a countywide initiative funded through First 5 LA and has more of a developmental focus on children ages 0 to 5. SHIELDS serves between 150 to 200 families every year.
  - The Up-Front Assessment Model is a component of the Point of Engagement Program. SHIELDS sends a licensed or registered clinician to assist the DCFS Emergency Response Team in their assessment of families. The clinician focuses on the parents, evaluating their strengths and determining whether they are willing to participate in services in order to either keep their families together, or come up with a plan for reunification.
  - SHIELDS' housing complexes have a program that allows the family to remain together in family apartments and provides on-site treatment and supportive services. During the program's first year, SHIELDS was able to reduce the out-of-home placement rate in the Compton DCFS office by over 50%.
  - SHIELDS also participated in the Multi-Disciplinary Assessment Team (MAT) pilot. MAT provides a thorough assessment engaging individuals involved with the child and looking at all areas of the child's life in order to have a complete understanding of the child's situation.
  - SHIELDS has been providing Family Preservation Services since 1992. Approximately 150 families received these services in 2012, and 85% of these families successfully completed the program. It is a very effective model and has reduced the number of children going into care.
  - Adoption Promotion and Support Services (APSS) are provided to help families having difficulty with the adoption process.
  - The Family-Centered Substance Abuse Treatment Program is focused on working with the entire family unit. This Program's duration is 18 to 24 months. Upon completion of the Program the family has the foundation for continued recovery. All programs have child development centers and your programs on-site. This model is gaining more recognition at the Federal level.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Ms. Icenhower responded with the following:

- Lifetime Aftercare is provided to families who complete the SHIELDS' ProgramS. Aftercare groups meet weekly.
- A study of Exodus' graduates in the Residential Substance Abuse Program was published in the Child Welfare, Journal of Policy, Practice, and Program.

By common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

Attachments:    [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

**7.**      Client Voice

- Consumer Advisory Board / Single Fathers Group (13-5104)

**Ms. Icenhower introduced members of SHIELDS Consumer Advisory Board and Single Fathers Group.**

- Crystal Fonseca, President of the Consumer Advisory Board (Board) explained that the Board meets weekly to openly discuss any issues or concerns regarding the treatment services. The meetings provide a forum for participants in the program to voice aspects of the treatment that is working and what is not working for them. Presently, the biggest issue being brought up at these meetings is lack of housing for single fathers.
- Manuel Mojarro, Board Member, explained that there is a lack of resources available to single fathers and that the issue is not with DCFS, his personal experience with the Department was positive, the real issue is how the system is set up.
- James Williams representing the Single Fathers Group provided a brief background of his situation and expressed his eagerness to be reunited with his three sons. He explained the biggest obstacle in being reunited with his children his lack adequate housing. An additional challenge is meeting the court-ordered visitation of three days per week as his

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children are placed in two separate Group Homes, two in Victorville and the other in Orange County. With his lack of transportation, the long distance placement only allows him to make one visit per week. The Court penalizes parents who are unable to meet the court-ordered visitation schedules.

- Reginald Brown representing the Single Fathers Group indicated that the biggest issue is housing for Single Fathers. The Court system holds parents accountable regardless of circumstances in meeting visitation schedules and threatens placing the children up for adoption when the criteria is not met. Historically, mothers have been the primary parent and housing has not been a major issue because many programs are designed with services for mothers. With the early release of prisoners under AB109, an increase in fathers wanting to be reunited with their children is expected and lack of housing opportunities will be a rising issue.
- Cass Rhome representing the Single Fathers Group shared his experience with the Court system and barriers to reunification with his children.

Ms. Icenhower explained that the majority of funding that exists is targeted for mothers. There is only one substance abuse program in the Country for men who have custody of their children.

Commissioner Biondi added that the Children's Institute has a very large Fatherhood Initiative.

In terms of long distance placement, Director Browning explained that placement is dependent on the foster parent and unfortunately many of the foster parents are located in the Antelope Valley and indicated that he was not aware of Judges penalizing parents for their inability to meet the visitation schedules under special circumstances nor was he aware of programs excluding men from services.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Ms. Icenhower explained the following:

- State and Federal legislation has specific criteria on funding that limits programs to women only. There is only one substance abuse program in the Country for men who have custody of their children located in Portland.



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**By common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.**

**8. Fatherhood Initiative**

- Joe Paul, Program Manager of Educational & Vocational Services - SHIELDS for Families
- Reverend Matt Harris, Ph.D., Executive Director Project IMPACT
- Bill Marshall, Ph.D., Board President, California Institute for Health and Social Services, Inc. (13-5107)

**Reverend Harris continued and presented the following:**

- **Project IMPACT was established in 1995 out of the need for promoting safety and well-being within the community through a faith-based continuum of care. Project IMPACT is in partnership with SHIELDS and Los Angeles County Child Welfare Coalition resulting in community success. Over a ten-year period of time, this continuum of care has resulted in a 52% decrease in out-of-home placement.**
- **Past Program highlights include:**
  - **Education through Collaboration: Through a network of community-based organizations, 10,000 backpacks with school supplies were distributed to children in need.**
  - **Day at the Beach: Through the Faith-based Fatherhood Initiative, a day at the beach was organized bringing together fathers with their children for a day of bonding and fun at the beach. Many of the participants had never experienced the beach.**
  - **Convocation Youth Sunday: In holding these Sunday events, it was realized that some of the reasons youth attended the events were that they were struggling with thoughts of suicide, separation anxiety from fathers, or suffering from experiences of violence within their families. This gathering provided an opportunity for the faith-based organizations to direct these troubled youth to services.**

**Mr. Paul presented the following:**

- **With an increase in fathers coming out of prison under AB109, SHIELDS has reached out to community partners to identify resources that provide supportive services. Through this strong community**



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network, SHIELDS Vocational Services has been able to focus on providing services that help families develop job skills and vocational abilities for sustainability. Approximately 45% of prisoners released under AB109 in Los Angeles County returned to SPA 6, indicating an increased need for supportive services in this area.

Dr. Marshall shared his personal experience which led to a dedication to help others in need and children at-risk of being removed from their families and presented the following:

- California Institute for Health and Social Services, Inc. (CIHSS) offers an array of services including Children's Way Foster Family Agency, Children's Way Adoption Program, Family Way Adult Family Home Agency, and services for children with developmental disabilities.
- In the African American community, 2 out of 3 children grow up without a father. Studies consistently show that children who are raised absent of a father are at higher risk, and 5 times more likely to live in poverty, 3 times more likely to drop out of school, and 2 times more likely to abuse drugs and be involved in a crime.

By common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

#### **IV. DISCUSSION**

9. Questions and Answer Session. (13-5138)

Questions and answers were addressed under Agenda Items 7 and 8.

#### **V. MISCELLANEOUS**

##### **Matters Not Posted**

10. Matters not posted on the agenda, to be discussed and (if requested) placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting of the Commission, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda. (13-5108)

There were none.

**Announcements**

11. Announcements for the meeting of November 4, 2013. (13-5109)

**There were none.**

**Public Comment**

12. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items of interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (13-5110)

**Ricky Hanson, Cass Rhome, and Cheryl Santillan addressed the Commission.**

**Adjournment**

13. Adjournment of the meeting of November 4, 2013. (13-5111)

**The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.**